



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1217.0.55.001 - Glossary of Statistical Geography Terminology, 2003

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 19/03/2004 First Issue

Summary

Main Features

Glossary of Statistical Geography Terminology

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

A

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Region

There are 36 administrative areas used by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) for the election of Regional Councils which represent the local Indigenous population. The administrative areas consist of 35 ATSIC Regions and one Torres Strait Regional Authority provided for under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act, 1989, sections 91(1) and 142(1) respectively. In general terms all 36 administrative areas are collectively referred to as 'ATSIC Regions'.

For census purposes, an ATSIC Region is approximated by aggregating the Collection Districts (CDs) which lie mostly or completely within the ATSIC Region. The 36 ABS derived ATSIC Regions (AREGs) cover in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. AREGs form the top level of the Australian Indigenous Geographical Classification (AIGC).

See Indigenous Area, Indigenous Location, Census Geographic Areas, Australian Indigenous Geographical Classification.

Aboriginal Council (AC)

A type of Local Government Area found in Queensland only (recognised under the "Community Services (Aborigines) Regulation 1984"). Aboriginal Councils, along with Torres Strait Islander Councils (IC)s, were first recognised as LGAs in the 2002 Edition of the ASGC.

Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA)

Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) was developed by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) and the National Key Centre For Social Applications of GIS (GISCA). ARIA measures the remoteness of a point based on the physical road distance to the nearest Urban Centre (ASGC 1996) in each of five size classes. ARIA was used to create the 2001 ASGC Remoteness Structure.

See Remoteness.

Antarctica

Not within the scope of the ASGC, however for census purposes temporary residents of this area are counted in offshore, shipping and migratory CDs for Tasmania.

Area (A)

A type of Local Government Area in New South Wales.

Australia

See Geographical Australia.

Australian Indigenous Geographical Classification (AIGC)

The AIGC aims to provide a geographical standard for the publication of statistics about the Indigenous population. This classification comprises four levels of geographic units in a single hierarchy, the smallest being the collection district (CD). CDs aggregate together to form Indigenous Localities (ILOCs), which then aggregate up to form Indigenous Areas (IAREs). These IAREs then aggregate up to form Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Regions (AREGs). The AIGC is defined only in census years. This classification was first produced for the 1996 Census.

For further information see Statistical Geography Volume 2: Census Geographic Areas Australia 2001 (cat. no. 2905.0)

Australia New Zealand Land Information Council (ANZLIC)

Is the peak inter-governmental council responsible for the coordination of land and geographic information management in Australia and New Zealand.

Australia Post Postcodes

Australia Post Postcodes are areas designed to facilitate the delivery of mail. Australia Post regularly adjusts its postcode boundaries and allocates new boundaries to take into account new development. Australia Post does not produce digital boundaries of their postcodes. As a result of demand from users wishing to use postcode to collect and disseminate data, the ABS has produce census geographic 'Postal Areas' which are ABS approximations of Australia Post Postcodes.

See Postal Areas.

Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)

The ASGC was developed by the ABS for the collection and dissemination of geographic statistics. It is a hierarchically structured classification with a number of spatial units to satisfy different statistical purposes. The ASGC is updated annually.

The ASGC areas used for the census are: Collection District (CD); Statistical Local Area (SLA); Local Government Area (LGA); Statistical Subdivision (SSD); Statistical Division (SD); Statistical District (S Dist); Statistical Region (SR); Major Statistical Region (MSR); Urban Centre/Locality (UC/L); Section of State (SOS); State/Territory (S/T) and Remoteness Area (RA). There is a separate entry in this glossary describing each of these geographical

areas.

For more information refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001** (cat. no. 1216.0); Statistical Geography Volume 2: Census Geographic Areas Australia 2001 (cat. no. 2905.0); Statistical Geography Volume 3: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Urban Centres/Localities 2001 (cat. no. 2909.0).

[Back to top](#)

B

Basemap

Is a term used when referring to the various layers of digital spatial data such as roads, rivers, railways, cadastre, etc. which form the basis of ABS's and most other GIS.

Boundaries

See Digital Boundaries.

Borough (B)

A type of Local Government Area in Victoria.

Bounded Locality

Bounded locality is a category in the ASGC Section of State Structure that provides for two categories of rural areas (Localities in the UC/L Structure) with a population of 500 to 999 and 200 to 499.

See Section of State, Urban Centre/Locality.

[Back to top](#)

C

Cadastre

The cadastre is a physical record of rights in and responsibilities for land. In common usage the term cadastre refers to the digital cadastral databases, managed by each state and territory, which record the size and shape of land parcels and which can be linked to land ownership information.

Capital City Statistical Division (Capital City SD or may be shown as CCSD)

Capital City Statistical Divisions (Capital City SDs) are predominantly urban in character and represent the State/Territory capital cities in the wider sense. A Capital City SD is defined to contain the anticipated urban development of a capital city (and its associated urban centres) for a period of at least twenty years. It delimits an area which is stable for general statistical purposes.

See Australian Standard Geographical Classification, Statistical Division (SD).

CD-Derived Postal Areas (POA)

See Postal Area.

Census Geographic Areas

Census Geographic Areas (which include Commonwealth Electoral Division (CED); State Electoral Division (SED); Postal Area (POA); State Suburb (SSC); ATSI Region (AREG); Indigenous Area (IARE); Indigenous Location (ILOC); and Journey to Work Study Areas (JTW) were created so that census data may be made available for common geographic areas other than those found in the ASGC. With the exception of the Journey to Work Destination Zones (JTWDZNs), all Census Geographic Areas are formed by an aggregation of whole Collection Districts (CDs). Census Geographic Areas are defined only in census years

For more details refer to Statistical Geography Volume 2: Census Geographic Areas, Australia 2001 (cat. no. 2905.0).

Census Collection District

See Collection District (CD).

Christmas Island

See Other Territories.

City (C)

A type of Local Government Area found in all States and Territories.

Cocos (Keeling) Islands

See Other Territories.

Coder/Coding

Geographical coding is the process of determining in which geographical area an individual statistical unit such as a household or business lies. Coding is generally the first step in aggregating spatial statistics.

See Geocoded National Address File (G-NAF), NLI Coder.

Collection District (CD)

The census Collection District (CD) is the smallest geographic area defined in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). It has been designed for use in the Census of Population and Housing as the smallest unit for collection, processing and output of data (except for some Journey to Work Destination Zones). CDs also serve as the basic building block in the ASGC and are used for the aggregation of statistics to larger census geographic areas.

A CD is represented by a unique seven digit code. For the 2001 Census there is an average of about 225 dwellings in each CD. In rural areas the number of dwellings per CD declines as population densities decrease. CDs are defined for each census and are current only at census time. For the 2001 Census, there are about 37,000 CDs covering all of Australia including the Other Territories of Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Jervis Bay.

See Water Collection Districts.

For more information refer to Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).

Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (CED)

A Commonwealth Electoral Division is an area legally prescribed for the purpose of returning one member to the Federal Lower House of Parliament. The derived Census Geographic Areas which approximate these official areas are known as Commonwealth Electoral Divisions (CED)s. The boundaries and census statistics produced for CEDs are Collection District (CD) derived. CED names are the same as those allocated by the Australian Electoral Commission.

See Census Geographic Areas.

Community Government Council (CGC)

A type of Local Government Area found in the Northern Territory recognised under a Community Government Scheme under the "Local Government Act". CGCs were included in the LGA structure of the ASGC for the first time in the 2003 Edition.

Computer Assisted Coder (CAC)

The 'CAC' or 'NLI Coder' is a standard Windows application that provided a search engine that allowed users to assign ASGC codes to individual addresses. The CAC software only allowed searches to be made as single queries. The NLI Coder for external users is no longer a standard product and is no longer supported.

Concordance/Concording

A concordance is a file which describes the relationship between different units in a classification. Geographical concordances generally list the smaller units in a hierarchy which together form the next higher or larger unit in the same structure of the classification (e.g. CDs within an SLA). However weighted concordances can be produced to describe an approximate relationship between units in parallel structures of the same classification (e.g. SLAs and Remoteness Areas) or units in entirely unrelated geographical classifications (e.g. SLAs and Postal Areas). Weighted concordances are generally either population or area weighted. While a weighted concordance may in itself accurately reflect the variable used for weighting, the use of a weighted concordance does not guarantee an accurate translation of other variables from one geography to another.

To assist users of the ASGC, the ABS has developed a number concordance files to enhance the comparability of data. A variety of new concordances are released annually in line with each edition of the ASGC. These concordances are available electronically in ASCII comma delimited text file format. Some examples of concordances include; 2001 CD to 2001 SLA; 2003 SLA to 2003 LGA; 2001 CD to 2001 RA and 2001 SLA to 2001 POA (population weighted).

Coordinates

Positions on the surface of the earth are defined by coordinate pairs. Coordinates may be expressed as eastings and northings, i.e. metres east and north of a particular datum point, or as latitudes and longitudes which is an angular measure (in degrees) of position

measured from the centre of the earth. Modern GIS can compute the relationship between different types of coordinates and convert one to the other as long as the datum and projection of the coordinate system is known.

See GDA 94, Geocoding.

[Back to top](#)

D

Digital Boundaries

ASGC and Census Geographic Areas Digital boundaries enable users of mapping/GIS software packages to map ASGC and Census Geographic areas onscreen. The boundaries can also be used to produce statistical maps of Census data, or of other data collected on these areas.

District Council (DC)

A type of Local Government Area where in South Australia.

Division

See Statistical Division.

[Back to top](#)

E

Electronic Structures

These are a product in the format of comma delimited text files that list the codes and labels of the ASGC Main Structure, Statistical District Structure, Statistical Region Structure, and the Alphabetic List of Local Government Areas and Statistical Local Areas within States/Territories. A new version of the Electronic Structures product is released annually in line with each edition of the ASGC.

External Territories

Those Australian territories (e.g. Norfolk Island, Macquarie Island, Herd Island) that are not included in the definition of geographical Australia.

See Geographical Australia.

[Back to top](#)

G

Gazetted Suburbs/Localities

Areas defined generally by Local Governments and gazetted (published) by the Geographical Naming Authority in each State/Territory. These are the official Suburbs/Localities which should be used by the general public in their postal and location address.

Geocentric Datum of Australia (GDA94)

All boundaries released by the ABS after August 2001 are based on the new Geocentric Datum of Australia (GDA94). GDA94 provides a internationally compatible coordinate system for all geographic data and allows Australia to gain significant benefit from Global Positioning Systems technology. The transformation of boundary data to GDA94 involves a significant shift, of about 200 metres to the north east, compared to coordinates based on the older Australian Geodetic Datum (AGD).

See Coordinates.

Geocoded National Address File (G-NAF)

The G-NAF initiative aims to provide a national standard for georeferencing and geocoding to ensure comparability of Australian spatial statistics and to eliminate duplication of effort by key players separately building their own geocoding infrastructure. G-NAF is currently being developed by PSMA Australia. PSMA Australia will launch the first release of G-NAF on 2 March 2004.

Geocoding

Geocoding is the process of giving something a latitude and longitude, thereby describing its position on the surface of the earth. In the case of statistical data this generally means assigning a latitude and longitude to a statistical unit such as a household or business.

Geographical Australia

For ASGC purposes, the ABS uses the definition of Australia as set out in section 17(a) of the "Acts Interpretation Act 1901" and as amended by the "Territories Law Reform Act, No. 104, 1992". Geographical Australia, since 1993, includes: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Jervis Bay Territory, and the External Territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

GIS

A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a combination of software, hardware, data and people which allows the display, manipulation, analysis and output of spatial (map) data.

GISCA

An acronym for the National Key Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). GISCA operates from the Adelaide University and was a key player in the development of ARIA, the basis for the ASGC Remoteness Structure.

[Back to top](#)

H

Heard Island

This island is an Australian External Territory situated to the south west of Australia. This island is not within the scope of the ASGC, however for census purposes temporary residents of this island are counted in offshore, shipping and migratory CDs for Tasmania.

[Back to top](#)

I

Incorporated Australia

That part of Geographical Australia over which incorporated local government bodies have responsibility. The areas over which the local government bodies have jurisdiction are known as Local Government Areas (LGAs).

See Local Government Area (LGA).

Indigenous Area (IARE)

Indigenous Areas (IAREs) are aggregates of Collection Districts (CDs) which represent a population of at least 300 Indigenous persons grouped on the basis of language, culture or some other community of interest. IAREs aggregate to ATSI Regions. IAREs, cover the whole of Australia. This area is defined only in a Census of Population & Housing year.

See Australian Indigenous Geographical Classification (AIGC), ATSI Region, Indigenous Location (ILOC).

Indigenous Location (ILOC)

Indigenous Locations (ILOCs) are single CDs or aggregates of CDs which have a population of at least 80 Indigenous persons. ILOCs aggregate to Indigenous Areas (IAREs). ILOCs cover the whole of Australia.

See Australian Indigenous Geographical Classification (AIGC), ATSI Region (AREG), Indigenous Area (IARE).

Inner Regional Australia

Inner Regional Australia is a category in the ASGC Remoteness Structure. Inner Regional Australia is defined as 'CDs with an average ARIA index value greater than 0.2 and less than or equal to 2.4'. Inner Regional Australia includes towns such as Hobart, Launceston, Noosa and Tamworth.

See ARIA, Remoteness, Remoteness Areas.

Island Council (IC)

A type of Local Government Area found in Queensland only (recognised under the "Community Services (Torres Strait) Regulation 1984)". Torres Strait Island Councils, along with Aboriginal Councils (AC)s, were first recognised as LGAs in the 2002 Edition of the ASGC.

[Back to top](#)

J

Jervis Bay Territory

See Other Territories.

Journey to Work (JTW)

Journey to Work data provide information on where a person works rather than where a person lives. The address of each employed person's usual workplace is used to code the work destination area. These destination areas are designed by the State Transport Authorities who require data on urban transport patterns to plan public transport systems.

For more information refer to Statistical Geography Volume 2: Census Geographic Areas Australia 2001 (cat. no. 2905.0).

Journey to Work: Destination Zone (JTWDZN)

See Journey to Work (JTW).

Journey to Work: Study Area (JTWSA)

See Journey to Work (JTW).

Back to top

L

Linge

The methodology/criteria for delimiting Urban Centres/Localities for each census is based on that developed by Dr G.J.R Linge from the Australian National University.

For more information refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0)**; and Statistical Geography Volume 3: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Urban Centres/Localities 2001 (cat. no. 2909.0)

Local Government Area (LGA)

The Local Government Area (LGA) is a geographical area under the responsibility of an incorporated local government council, or an incorporated Community Government Council in the Northern Territory. The LGAs in Australia collectively cover only a part of Australia. The main areas not covered by LGAs are the extensive northern parts of South Australia, a large part of the Northern Territory, all of the Australian Capital Territory and the Other Territories.

The number of LGAs and their boundaries can change over time. Their creation and delimitation is the responsibility of the respective State/Territory Governments, and are governed by the provisions of State/Territory local government Acts.

For more information and a list of the Local Government Areas in each State and the Northern Territory, refer to the annual edition of Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) (cat. no. 1216.0).

Locality

Locality is a term used by different people to mean different things and assumptions should not be made about what the term means in any given usage. An increasingly important official use of the term is for the areas defined by Geographical Naming Authorities as Suburbs/Localities (See Gazetted suburbs/localities).

There are two definitions for 'Locality' that relate to the ASGC.

The first relates to the Urban Centre/Locality Structure of the ASGC where a Locality is generally defined as a population cluster of between 200 and 999 people.

The second definition relates to the National Localities Index (NLI) where a Locality is defined as the name of a place where people live or work—or say they live and work. Thus an NLI locality is generally an unbounded or 'fuzzy' area which may not correspond exactly to an official suburb/locality.

See Urban Centre/Locality, National Localities Index.

Lord Howe Island

This island is situated off the coast of New South Wales, approximately 580km east of Port Macquarie. This island is part of the Mid-North Coast Statistical Division (SD) of NSW.

[Back to top](#)

M

Macquarie Island

This island is located to the south of mainland Australia. Officially part of Tasmania, Macquarie Island is within the scope of the ASGC and is part of the Huon Valley (M) LGA, however for census purposes temporary residents of this area are counted in offshore, shipping and migratory CDs for Tasmania.

Main Structure

The Main Structure is the most widely used of the ASGC Structures. This Structure consists of five hierarchical levels at Population Census times, comprising in ascending order: CDs—SLAs—SSDs—SDs—S/Ts. In non-census years CDs are undefined and the Main Structure has only four levels.

For more information refer to Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).

Major Cities of Australia

Major Cities of Australia (not to be confused with Major Urban) is a category in the ASGC Remoteness Structure. Major Cities of Australia is defined as 'CDs with an average ARIA index value of 0 to 0.2'. The 'Major Cities of Australia' class includes most capital cities, as well as major urban areas such as Newcastle, Geelong and the Gold Coast.

See ARIA, Remoteness, Remoteness Areas.

Major Statistical Region (MSR)

Major Statistical Regions (MSR) divide each of the five larger States, NSW, Vic, Qld, SA and WA into two geographical areas: one equates with the Capital City Statistical Division and the other with the balance of the State. Due to population size limitations, Tasmania, Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories each consist of only one MSR corresponding to the whole of the State/Territory.

For more information refer to Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).

Major Urban

Major Urban is a category of the ASGC Section of State Structure. This category provides for three sub-categories of urban areas (Urban Centres from the UC/L Structure) based upon population ranges of 1,000,000 or more, 250,000 to 999,999, and 100,000 to 249,999.

See Section of State.

MapInfo Professional

The Geographic Information System (GIS) software most widely used within the ABS.

Mesh Block

A proposed new micro level of geography, about one fifth the size of a CD but large enough to contain a 'safe' number of dwellings. Such units are used by other National Statistics Offices and are variously known as Mesh Blocks, Unit Blocks or Block Faces. A Mesh Block could consist of between 20 and 50 dwellings (yet to be decided) and will be designed to aggregate reasonably exactly to the widest possible range of administrative and natural boundaries. Only very basic Census data will be published at the Mesh Block level, perhaps only number of dwellings and population counts, but the full range of Census data will be available for combinations of Mesh Blocks. Mesh Blocks are proposed for the 2006 Census.

Metropolitan

Metropolitan is a term often used by different people to mean different things. It was defined in the Rural Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) Classification (See Rural Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA)) as being the Statistical Subdivisions containing Major Urban Centres. While the ABS has not defined the term "Metropolitan" in its own geography it is often interpreted as the Capital City Statistical Division in each State/Territory with Ex-metropolitan being the remainder of the State/Territory.

Migratory

ASGC Structures such as Section of State and the Remoteness Structure contain a category titled 'Migratory'. This category is composed of off-shore, shipping and migratory Collection Districts (CDs).

See Migratory Collection District.

Migratory Collection District

Off-Shore, Shipping and Migratory Collection Districts (CDs), contain people who are enumerated on off-shore oil rigs, drilling platforms and the like, aboard ship in Australian waters, or on an overnight journey by train or bus. There is one such category for each State and the Northern Territory.

Australians in Antarctica are within the scope of the Census and are coded to an Off-Shore CD in Tasmania.

Municipality/Municipal Council (M)

A type of Local Government Area in South Australia and Tasmania.

[Back to top](#)

N

National Localities Index (NLI)

Is a coding tool developed by the ABS to assist users assign the Main Structure of the ASGC to address based data. The NLI consists of 2 parts; a Localities file and a Streets Sub-Index file. A new edition of the NLI is released each year to reflect any ASGC changes.

National Localities Index (NLI) Coder

See Computer Assisted Coder (CAC).

Non-ASGC Areas

See Census Geographic Areas.

Norfolk Island

This island is part of Australia's External Territories and is outside the scope of the ASGC and the census.

Nil CD

A nil CD is a Collection District which is deliberately designed to contain zero population. Nil CDs are a valuable mechanism for separating populated from unpopulated areas rather than spreading the population count for small clusters of population over very large unpopulated areas. A very small number of people who do happen to be present in a nil CD on census night may be coded to a predetermined adjacent CD.

[Back to top](#)

O

Off-Shore Collection District

See Migratory Collection District.

Origin Zone

See Journey to Work (JTW).

Other Territories

Prior to the 1996 Census no external territories were included in geographical Australia, although census data were collected for Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Following amendments to the Acts Interpretation Act 1901–1973 effective from July 1992, the two external territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands became part of geographical Australia. Since the 1996 Census, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, and the Jervis Bay Territory (previously linked to the Australian Capital Territory for statistical purposes) comprise a pseudo 'ninth State/Territory' of Australia. They are included in State nine 'Other Territories'.

The other Australian external territories (Norfolk Island, Heard Island and Australian Antarctic Territories), remain outside the scope of the ASGC. Please see Heard Island and Antarctica for their treatment in the Census.

Other Urban

Other Urban is a category of the ASGC Section of State Structure. This category provides for five sub-categories of urban areas (Urban Centres from the UC/L Structure) based upon population ranges of 50,000 to 99,999, 20,000 to 49,999, 10,000 to 19,999, 5,000 to 9,999 and 1,000 to 4,999.

Outer Regional Australia

Outer Regional Australia is a category in the ASGC Remoteness Structure. Outer Regional Australia is defined as 'CDs with an average ARIA index value greater than 2.4 and less than or equal to 5.92'. Outer Regional Australia includes towns and cities such as Darwin, Whyalla, Cairns and Gunnedah.

See ARIA, Remoteness, Remoteness Areas.

[Back to top](#)

P

Postal Area (POA)

Postal Areas are ABS approximations of Australia Post postcodes, created by allocating whole Collection Districts (CDs) on a 'best fit' basis to postcodes.

Census Postal Areas exclude non-mappable Australia Post postcodes such as: post office box postcodes; some delivery route postcodes, which are also covered by other postcodes (a situation which often occurs in rural areas); and some postcodes which, because of the application of the 'best fit' principle, do not get a CD allocated to them.

This means that there are more Australia Post postcodes than census Postal Areas. Every CD is allocated one valid Australia Post postcode as the Postal Area for that CD. When a person is enumerated in that CD, the Postal Area is allocated to the person as their Postal Area of enumeration.

Postcode

See Postal Area, Australia Post Postcode.

Public Sector Mapping Agencies Australia (PSMA)

PSMA Australia Limited is an unlisted public company that has evolved to facilitate access to seamless national spatial datasets derived from government data sources. The vast majority of digital spatial data and basemap used by the ABS is supplied by PSMA Australia. ABS has a contract with PSMA for the supply, maintenance and regular updating of this data.

[Back to top](#)

R

Region

See Statistical Region, ATSI Region.

Regional Council (RegC)

A type of Local Government Area in South Australia.

Remoteness

Within the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), the Remoteness classification comprises five categories each of which identifies a (non-contiguous) region in Australia having a particular degree of remoteness. The categories range from 'Major Cities of Australia' to 'Very Remote Australia'.

The degree of remoteness of each Collection District (CD) was determined using the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). CDs have then been grouped into the appropriate category of Remoteness to form non-contiguous areas within each state.

See Australian Standard Geographical Classification, Census Geographic Areas.

For more information refer to Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0) and ABS Views on Remoteness (cat. no. 1244.0).

Remoteness Area (RA)

Remoteness Areas (RA) are the spatial units that make up the ASGC Remoteness Classification. There are six classes of Remoteness Area in the Remoteness Structure; Major Cities of Australia, Inner Regional Australia, Outer Regional Australia, Remote Australia, Very Remote Australia and Migratory. Remoteness Areas are aggregations of Collection Districts which share common characteristics of Remoteness.

For more information refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).**

Remote Australia

Remote Australia is a category in the ASGC Remoteness Structure. Remote Australia is defined as 'CDs with an average ARIA index value greater than 5.92 and less than or equal to 10.53. Examples of Remote Australia include Alice Springs, Mount Isa and Esperance.

See ARIA, Remoteness, Remoteness Areas.

Rural

The ABS defines "Rural" in the ASGC Section of State Structure as areas which are not part of any "Urban" area. The Bounded Locality and Rural Balance categories of SOS thus make up "Rural" Australia.

Rural Balance

Rural Balance is a category of the ASGC Section of State Structure. This category provides for those areas not included in the other four categories of the SOS Structure (i.e. Major

Urban, Other Urban, Bounded Locality and Migratory).

See Section of State.

Rural City (RC)

A type of Local Government Area in Victoria and South Australia.

Rural Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) Classification

This classification was defined for the then (Commonwealth) Departments of Primary Industry and Energy and Human Services and Health in 1994 based on 1991 Census data. Although the ABS contributed to the development of the classification and the underlying index of remoteness, RRMA is not an ABS classification. The classification has not been revised since 1994 and, as such, may not be representative of the relative remoteness of areas more than ten years later.

The classes defined in RRMA are Metropolitan Areas (Capital City and Other Metropolitan Centres), Non-metropolitan Zones (Rural Zone and Remote Zone). The rural and Remote Zones are further subdivided into Large Rural Centre, Small Rural Centres, Other Rural Area and Remote Centre and Other Remote Area. These categories are defined on population size of the largest Urban Centre within the SLA based on 1991 population. The population of these Urban Centres may have changed considerably since 1991 making the classification, in the absence of a complete revision, less relevant as time passes.

[Back to top](#)

S

Section of State (SOS)

This geographical classification uses population counts to define Collection Districts (CDs) as urban or rural and to provide, in aggregate, statistics for urban concentrations and for bounded localities and balance areas. SOS represents an aggregation of non-contiguous geographical areas of a particular urban/rural type. The Sections of State defined include Major Urban (population clusters of 100,000 or more), Other Urban (population clusters of 1,000 to 99,999), Bounded Locality (200 to 999), Rural Balance (remainder of State/Territory) and Migratory, and in aggregate cover the whole of Australia.

See Australian Standard Geographical Classification.

For more information, refer to Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).

Shipping Collection District

See Migratory Collection District.

Shire (S)

A type of Local Government Area.

Spatial Data

Spatial data are data about an object or feature on, above or below the surface of the earth. They are data that can be mapped, including data about natural resources, the environment,

social services and infrastructure as well as digital versions of topographic maps and hydrographic charts.

While statistical data can be mapped if they relate to a defined area for which digital boundaries are available, the ABS treats the digital boundaries themselves as spatial data and the often large and complex data sets, which may or may not be linked to those boundaries, as statistics. For example CD boundaries are spatial data while Basic Community Profiles are statistics.

Special Purpose ASGC Codes

To allow data to be coded when only incomplete locational information is available, a series of special purpose codes has been created for each hierarchical level within the ASGC's Main Structure and for Statistical Regions within the Statistical Region Structure. These codes are used when people provide limited address details or have no fixed place of abode.

For more information refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).**

State/Territory (S/T)

Six States and five Territories area recognised in the ASGC. Note that Jervis Bay Territory and the external territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands are grouped for statistical purposes into a ninth State/Territory category, 'Other Territories'.

See Geographical Australia.

For more information refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).**

State Electoral Divisions (SED)

A State Electoral Division is an area legally prescribed for the purpose of returning one or more members to the State or Territory lower Houses of Parliament. The derived Census Geographic Areas which approximate these official areas are known as State Electoral Divisions (SED)s. The boundaries and census statistics produced for SEDs are Collection District CD derived. SED names are the same as those allocated by the Electoral Commission in each State/Territory.

See Census Geographic Areas.

State Suburb (SSC)

This is a census-specific area where Collection Districts are aggregated to approximate suburbs. It is applicable only to the larger urban centres e.g. Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Melbourne, Geelong, Adelaide, Perth and major towns in Tasmania. For a list of State Suburbs, see Statistical Geography Volume 2: Census Geographic Areas, Australia (cat. no. 2905.0).

Note that the ASGC Statistical Local Areas in Brisbane and other major urban areas in Queensland, Darwin and Canberra are aligned closely with suburbs. For a list of these, see **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).**

Statistical District (S Dist)

A Statistical District (S Dist) is an Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) defined area which bounds a large predominantly urban area outside the Capital City Statistical Divisions (SDs). A S Dist consists of one or more urban centres in close proximity to each other, with a total population of 25,000 or more. The boundaries of S Dists are defined to contain the anticipated urban spread of the area for a period of at least twenty years.

S Dists consist of one or more Statistical Subdivisions (SSDs) and may cross Local Government Area (LGA) boundaries. Statistical Districts can, and in three cases do, straddle Statistical Division and State/Territory boundaries. The Gold Coast-Tweed S Dist encompasses an urban area which lies partly in Queensland and partly in New South Wales. The Albury-Wodonga S Dist straddles the New South Wales/Victorian border. The Canberra-Queanbeyan S Dist is partly in the Australian Capital Territory and partly in New South Wales.

For a list of Statistical Districts, and their component Statistical Subdivisions and Statistical Local Areas, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).**

Statistical Division (SD)

A Statistical Division (SD) is an Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) defined area which represents a large, general purpose, regional type geographic area. SDs represent relatively homogeneous regions characterised by identifiable social and economic links between the inhabitants and between the economic units within the region, under the unifying influence of one or more major towns or cities. They consist of one or more Statistical Subdivisions (SSDs) and cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. They do not cross State or Territory boundaries and are the largest statistical building blocks of States and Territories.

In New South Wales, proclaimed New South Wales Government Regions coincide with SDs except for North Coast, which consists of the SDs of Richmond-Tweed and Mid-North Coast.

In the remaining States and Territories, SDs are designed in line with the ASGC general purpose regional spatial unit definition.

For more information and a list of the Statistical Divisions in each State/Territory, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0).** Maps are available from ABS Information Consultancy.

Statistical Geography

See Australian Standard Geographical Classification, Census Geographic Areas.

Statistical Local Area (SLA)

The Statistical Local Area (SLA) is an Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) defined area. In census years SLAs consist of one or more Collection Districts (CDs). In intercensal years the SLA is the smallest spatial unit defined by the ASGC. SLAs are Local Government Areas (LGAs), or parts thereof. Where there is no incorporated body of local government, SLAs are defined to cover the unincorporated areas. SLAs cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

For more information and a list of the Statistical Local Areas in each State/Territory, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification**

(ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0). Maps are available from ABS Information Consultancy.

Statistical Region (SR)

The Statistical Region (SR) is an Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) defined area which has sufficient population to be suitable for the presentation of both population census and labour force statistics within the frameworks for standard statistical outputs from these collections. SRs cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

For more information and a list of the Statistical Regions in each State/Territory, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0)**. Maps are available from ABS Information Consultancy.

Statistical Subdivision (SSD)

The Statistical Subdivision (SSD) is an Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) defined area which represents an intermediate level, general purpose, regional type geographic unit. SSDs consist of one or more Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) and cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

For more information and a list of the Statistical Subdivisions in each State/Territory, refer to **Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2001 (cat. no. 1216.0)**. Maps are available from ABS Information Consultancy.

Subdivision

See Statistical Subdivision (SSD).

Suburb

See State Suburb.

Back to top

T

Territory

See State/Territory, Geographical Australia.

Tourism Regions

Tourism Regions are a customised (non-standard) aggregation of Statistical Local Areas designed to align as closely as possible to the regions used by the tourism industry to describe and classify parts of Australia for the analysis and promotion of tourism.

Town (T)

A type of Local Government Area in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Back to top

U

Unincorporated

Unincorporated areas are those areas which are not under the responsibility of an incorporated local government. The major areas of Australia not covered by incorporated bodies are the northern parts of South Australia, the far west of New South Wales, large areas of the Northern Territory and all of the Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories.

See Local Government Area.

Urban Centre/Locality (UC/L)

The UC/L Structure of the ASGC is used for the production of standard statistical outputs from the Population Censuses. UC/Ls are defined for each Census and are current for the date of the Census. The criteria for bounding UC/Ls are based on the Linge methodology.

An Urban Centre is generally defined as a population cluster of 1,000 or more people. A Locality is generally defined as a population cluster of between 200 and 999 people. People living in Urban Centres are classified as urban for statistical purposes while those in Localities are classified as rural (i.e. non-urban). Each Urban Centre and/or Locality (UC/L) is bounded (i.e. a boundary for it is clearly defined) and composed of one or more whole Collection Districts (CDs). UC/Ls are revised at each Census so from one census to the next both the population and the area of a UC/L may change.

For more information refer to Statistical Geography Volume 3: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Urban Centres/Localities (cat. no. 2909.0).

[Back to top](#)

V

Very Remote Australia

Very Remote Australia is a category in the ASGC Remoteness Structure. Very Remote is defined as 'CDs with an average ARIA index value greater than 10.53. Very Remote Australia represents much of central and western Australia and includes towns such as Tennant Creek, Longreach and Coober Pedy.

See ARIA, Remoteness, Remoteness Areas.

[Back to top](#)

W

Water Collection Districts

Water Collection Districts (CDs) are assigned to bodies of water that are required to be separated from the land area for enumeration and dissemination purposes. For example, sections of Sydney Harbour where people are likely to be resident on vessels on Census Night.

Water CDs have a default land-based CD so that any person enumerated in a water CD is coded to the default land-based CD. This ensures population is not mapped in waterways. Water CDs therefore do not have any statistical data associated with them i.e. they are nil CDs.

Work Destination Zone

See Journey to Work (JTW).

[Back to top](#)

Z

Zone

See Journey to Work (JTW).

[Back to top](#)

About this release

Contains brief explanations and definitions of various geographical terms and classifications used in ABS products.

© Commonwealth of Australia

All data and other material produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) constitutes Commonwealth copyright administered by the ABS. The ABS reserves the right to set out the terms and conditions for the use of such material. Unless otherwise noted, all material on this website – except the ABS logo, the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and any material protected by a trade mark – is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Australia licence